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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#) [LE](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: A/S SILVERBERG DISCUSSES LEBANON AND UNSCR 1701
ISSUES WITH ISRAELI MFA DDG YA'AR

REF: A) TEL AVIV 1704 B) BEIRUT 0818 C) BEIRUT 0805

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones; Reasons 1.4 (B and D).

11. (C) Summary: IO A/S Kristen Silverberg discussed Lebanon and UNSCR 1701 issues with MFA IO Deputy Director General Roni Leshno-Ya'ar and his staff on June 7 in Jerusalem. Ya'ar reiterated Israeli concerns over the rearmament of Hizballah, noting Israeli plans to meet with the UN border assessment team and reluctance to share sensitive intelligence with UN offices. A/S Silverberg relayed UNIFIL's frustration with the level of cooperation from the IDF and urged Ya'ar to encourage the IDF to address some of UNIFIL's reasonable requests (return calls from UNIFIL, establish a hotline, etc.) which will help maintain the international community's focus on Hizballah. Ya'ar agreed to speak with the IDF, but complained that "UNIFIL is not doing enough." He urged postponement of action on the status or definition of the Sheba farms until at least September, claiming that UNSCO shares this point of view. A/S Silverberg sought the GOI's views on the upcoming UNIFIL extension. Ya'ar urged a "technical extension" and promised to brief the USG following GOI-UNSCO meetings during the week of June 10. Reftel (A) reports on A/S Silverberg's discussions on other IO issues. End Summary.

GOI Concerns with Arms Smuggling

12. (C) Calling Turkey's discovery of arms shipments to Syria a "smoking gun," Ya'ar reiterated Israeli concerns over the rearmament of Hizballah. He added that Israeli intelligence services are increasingly reluctant to brief the UN on weapons shipments because past intelligence materials had found their way from UN staff to Hizballah. Ya'ar said the UN must find some symbolic way for UNIFIL to have an anti-smuggling role. In addition, he advocated expediting the German program on border security.

13. (C) Ya'ar noted that the GOI had not met with the UN's border assessment team prior to their departure for Lebanon, but said Israeli experts would do so during the week of June 10 in New York. IDF Strategic Planning Chief BG Udi Dekel will brief them then as well. A/S Silverberg encouraged the GOI to reiterate with the UN Missions the need to focus on preventing arms smuggling (as opposed to other contraband), to raise its concerns with UNSCO, and to share the results of these meetings with the USG.

UNIFIL's Difficulties Dealing with the IDF

14. (C) Stressing our mutual interest in focusing the international community on Hizballah's ongoing violations of UNSCR 1701, A/S Silverberg encouraged the GOI to work more closely with UNIFIL. She noted that UNIFIL commander MG Claudio Graziano had expressed growing frustration on several issues: the failure of Israeli military officers to answer UNIFIL's calls; continued stalling on installation of a "hot line" between UNIFIL and the IDF; a May 28 violation of the Blue Line by IDF ground forces, along with UNIFIL's usual complaints about overflights. A/S Silverberg stated that as the Council approaches the UNIFIL extension, it will be important to keep the focus on Hizballah, by avoiding unnecessarily frustrating Graziano. UN Political Affairs Deputy Gershon Kedar said that the IDF had not intended to cross the Blue Line on May 28, invoking--as the GOI has done in the past--the excuse that the border needs to be demarcated because its exact location is unclear due to the "width of the pen line on the map." Ya'ar agreed to speak with the IDF, adding that the Israeli Mission in New York had advised the MFA to deal directly with MG Graziano.

15. (C) Despite Israel's public statements to the contrary, Ya'ar said the GOI "believes we have a real problem" with UNIFIL. He alleged that "Hizballah has freedom of action" in southern Lebanon and complained that "UNIFIL is not doing enough." While acknowledging that some troops such as the Spanish are more proactive than others, Ya'ar said that the problem stems from UNIFIL's interpretation of its rules of engagement. He called upon UN troops to establish roadblocks inside villages, to patrol the "nature reserves,"

and to search private Lebanese homes for arms.

Ya'ar Urges Postponement of Any Action on Sheba

16. (C) Ya'ar reiterated GOI concerns with Lebanese PM Siniora's seven-point plan, especially on Sheba, as long as IDF soldiers remain in Hizballah custody and Hizballah is not disarmed. He also expressed skepticism that the GOI would move quickly to implement the Hariri tribunal resolution. A/S Silverberg described her discussions on Sheba in Beirut (reftel C). Ya'ar reiterated the GOI's strong objection to any action on Sheba, saying he is "more convinced than even before that moving on Sheba will only cause problems for Siniora and get us into trouble." He said the GOI had seen the UN's map of Sheba, which falls far short of Lebanese expectations. Any delineation of the Sheba area will only increase international pressure on Israel to withdraw, a step it will not take under current circumstances. Ya'ar also questioned the appropriateness of assigning sovereignty based upon property ownership and noted the risk that doing so would help set a problematic precedent. Syria-Lebanon Analyst Amir Weissbrod added that assigning sovereignty to "properties" could open a whole array of problematic issues from Lebanese holdings in Israel's Hula Valley to Jewish property in Lebanon's Marjayoun area.

17. (C) In Ya'ar's view, the next step on Sheba should be a Syrian-Lebanese agreement on a border. UN custody over Sheba is a "non-starter." The MFA will urge the rest of the GOI to share information with the UN cartographer and encourage him to continue his work into the fall. Ya'ar claimed that UNSCO Michael Williams shares this view and will postpone dealing with the report until September. Ya'ar also objected to any action by the UN to demarcate Sheba (i.e., to identify the area in dispute). A/S Silverberg questioned the feasibility of that approach, noting that the UN had promised a report from the cartographer. She said that it seems both likely and acceptable that the cartographer would address the proper demarcation of Sheba, but that the USG would continue to press to ensure the cartographer refrains from any judgments on sovereignty. She requested an update from the GOI

following their talks with Williams during the week of June 10.

GOI Prefers Technical Extension of UNIFIL

18. (C) After discussing the difficult internal political situation facing the GOL, A/S Silverberg noted that her Lebanese interlocutors had been unanimous in cautioning against any attempts to change the provisions of UNSCR 1701 during the renewal process. She requested the GOI's views on the desirability of a technical rollover or of possible changes. Ya'ar replied that the GOI prefers a "technical extension" that "takes the situation on the ground into account." For example, if Hizballah is moving armaments to areas north of the Litani River, then UNIFIL should be empowered to deal with the situation. In addition, the Israelis suggested reviewing UNIFIL's mandate every six months to maintain pressure for change. Ya'ar noted that the GOI would discuss the mandate renewal process in its upcoming meetings with Williams and Geir Pedersen.

19. (U) A/S-equivalent Roni Leshno-Ya'ar was joined by Director for UN Political Affairs Roni Adam, Deputy Director for UN Political Affairs Gershon Kedar, UN Political Affairs Desk Officer Livia Link, and Director for Syria-Lebanon Research (INR) Amir Weissbrod.

10. (U) A/S Silverberg has cleared this cable.

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JONES